

**North Carolina Department of Transportation
Division of Highways
Traffic Engineering and Safety Systems Branch**

**Standard Practice
for
Schools: Elementary (K – 5th Grade), Middle (6th – 8th Grade), and High (9th – 12th Grade)**

The purpose of this standard practice is to establish minimum guidelines used for supplemental guide (directional) signing for public, private, and charter Elementary, Middle, and High schools along NCDOT roadways. This practice is intended to restrict signing along NCDOT roadways for educational facilities that do not generate a minimum level of traffic by unfamiliar motorists. It is not intended to allow signing for the purpose of promotion or advertisement of educational facilities. The intent is to set reasonable guidelines to promote statewide consistency in responses for school signing requests.

It is the standard practice of NCDOT not to install guide signs for Elementary, Middle, and High schools (public, private and charter) on conventional roads or other non-controlled access facilities except for those that meet the following criteria. The requesting educational facility must meet all specific criteria for that facility. Signs shall be designed, located and erected according to the standards of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), the North Carolina Supplement to the MUTCD, the North Carolina Roadway Standard Drawings, and the standards and criteria herein.

CRITERIA

- All requests for school signing should be directed in writing to the appropriate Division Engineer and should originate from the school principal.
- Signing for a school is only allowed if the school has a minimum enrollment of 500 students or has a substantial number of public events drawing unfamiliar motorists to the facility.
- Signing for Elementary and Middle schools shall not be allowed on the mainline or ramps of Interstate and other full control access facilities.
- Signing for High schools shall not be allowed on the mainline of Interstate and other full control of access facilities, but may be allowed on ramps, provided space is available, if enrollment is at least 1800 students and all criteria herein are met.
- If the school is directly located on a US or NC route, the school does not qualify for signing. If the school is located on a Secondary Road or municipal street, the school may be signed from the nearest US or NC intersection not to exceed three (3) miles from the school in urban areas and six (6) miles from the school in rural areas, providing all criteria herein are met.
- The qualified school shall be limited to two (2) supplemental directional guide signs (one per each direction from nearest US or NC route) with trailblazers installed as necessary based on engineering judgment.
- If the school has a web site, clear and specific directions, preferably with a map, shall be posted on the web page.
- Adequate on-premise signing is required prior to any approval and installation of any supplemental guide (directional) signs.

- Any signing off highway right-of-way and on-premise signing is the responsibility of the school requesting the signs.
- The Department has the responsibility and authority to relocate or remove signs if a need for a higher priority regulatory, warning, or guide sign is identified.
- The Department reserves the right to cover, relocate, or remove any signs for maintenance or construction operations, or when deemed to be in the best interest of the traveling public, without advance notice.
- All costs involved in fabricating, erecting, and maintaining signs for qualifying public schools shall be the responsibility of the Department.
- All costs involved in fabricating, erecting, and maintaining signs for qualifying private schools shall be the responsibility of the requesting party.
- The Division Engineer, or his designate, having jurisdiction in the county in which the sign is proposed shall investigate and approve the location for each sign.
- Signing for schools is considered supplemental to the overall signing system for expressways and conventional roads. Therefore, before a sign for a school is installed, sufficient space shall exist to accommodate the placement of the sign without interfering or conflicting with required signing.
- Sign designs shall conform to the attached standards for letter size and typical layout.
- This practice is not intended for use in removal of existing signs; however, when a new project is established for the North Carolina highway system, or when existing signs are in need of replacement, repair, or maintenance, conformance with this practice is required.
- As described in General Statute 136-30 (a), (b), and (d), the Department has the authority to control all signs within the right of way of the State Highway System.

§ G.S. 136-30. Uniform signs and other traffic control devices on highways, streets, and public vehicular areas. (a) State Highway System. - The Department of Transportation may number and mark highways in the State highway system. All traffic signs and other traffic control devices placed on a highway in the State highway system must conform to the Uniform Manual. The Department of Transportation shall have the power to control all signs within the right-of-way of highways in the State highway system. The Department of Transportation may erect signs directing persons to roads and places of importance. (b) Municipal Street System. - All traffic signs and other traffic control devices placed on a municipal street system street must conform to the appearance criteria of the Uniform Manual. All traffic control devices placed on a highway that is within the corporate limits of a municipality but is part of the State highway system must be approved by the Department of Transportation. (d) Definition. - As used in this section, the term "Uniform Manual" means the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways, published by the United States Department of Transportation, and any supplement to that Manual adopted by the North Carolina Department of Transportation.